

A Scoping Review of Religious Syncretism and Cultural Adaptation in Gabonese Diasporic Communities,

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Author notes

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Abstract

Background:

The Gabonese diaspora, dispersed globally, engages in complex processes of cultural and religious adaptation. Within the Arts & Humanities, understanding how these communities negotiate religious identity through syncretism—the blending of distinct religious traditions—is a developing scholarly focus for the contemporary period.

Purpose

and

objectives:

This scoping review aims to map and synthesise scholarly literature from 2021 to 2025 on religious syncretism and cultural adaptation within Gabonese diasporic communities. Its objectives are to identify key themes, methodological approaches, and gaps in the current research landscape.

Methodology:

The review adhered to the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) framework for scoping reviews. Systematic searches were executed across relevant Arts & Humanities academic databases. Included sources were peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings in English and French, published between January 2021 and December 2025.

Findings/Key

insights:

The literature demonstrates a predominant geographical focus on Gabonese communities in Europe, especially France and Belgium. A key insight is the strategic syncretism of Pentecostal Christianity with traditional Gabonese practices, like ancestor veneration, to navigate existential concerns of displacement and belonging. Research on diasporic communities in other regions remains notably scarce.

Conclusion:

The review concludes that religious syncretism acts as a dynamic, agentive strategy for cultural adaptation within the Gabonese diaspora, aiding identity preservation whilst engaging with host societies. Existing research is geographically concentrated, leaving significant diasporic hubs under-examined.

Recommendations:

Future research should investigate Gabonese communities in North America, Asia, and within Africa. Longitudinal and ethnographic studies are needed to better understand the lived experience of syncretism across different generations.

Key

words:

Religious syncretism, cultural adaptation, Gabon, diaspora, transnationalism, hybridity, Arts & Humanities.

Contribution

statement:

This review consolidates current knowledge on a specific African diaspora, providing a foundational resource for scholars in religious studies and diaspora studies within the Arts & Humanities.

Keywords: *Gabonese diaspora, religious syncretism, cultural adaptation, African diasporas, transnationalism, creolisation*